

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USIA-06 CG-00 DOTE-00 NSF-01 /066 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5117

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SV, NO

SUBJECT: SVALBARD BILATERALS - SENSATIONAL PRESS DISPARAGES

BILATERAL TALKS

REFS: (A) OSLO 4982, (B) OSLO 4953 (NOTAL), (C) STATE

236750 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE SENSATIONALIST OSLO DAILY "DAGBLADET" PUBLISHED A PROVOCATIVE STORY OCT 7 REPORTING ON UPCOMING BILATERAL SVALBARD TALKS. IT QUESTIONS LEVEL OF US DELEGATION TO THE TALKS, CASTS SOME ASPERSIONS ON US BACKGROUND ON AND INTEREST IN SVALBARD. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL CALLED EMBASSY TO STATE THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY DOES NOT AGREE WITH COMMENTS PUBLISHED IN ARTICLE AND DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMENTARY. WE PLAN MAKE NO COMMENT ON ARTICLE. HOWEVER, IN ANTICIPATION OF QUESTIONS ON UPCOMING MEETING WE HAVE AGREED WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY ON SUGGESTED FACTUAL, LIMITED AND LOW-KEY GUIDANCE FOR PRESS
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QUESTIONS ON UPCOMING MEETINGS, SUBJECT TO ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE DEPT WISHES PROVIDE.

END SUMMARY

1. ON OCT 7 THE SENSATIONALIST OSLO DAILY "DAGBLADET" PUBLISHED ARTICLE ON UPCOMING US-NORWEGIAN SVALBARD TALKS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEST

LEAD: EARLY NEXT WEEK A DELEGATION OF AMERICAN EXPERTS ARRIVES IN OSLO TO HAVE TALKS WITH LEADING OFFICIALS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT SVALBARD AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE SVALBARD CONTINENTAL SHELF. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE DELEGATION'S REPORT ON THESE ISSUES WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR AMERICA'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS NORWAY WITH REGARD TO SVALBARD AND THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

TEXT: THE AMERICAN VISIT IS A CONTINUATION OF THE DIALOG WHICH WAS STARTED BETWEEN NORWEGIAN AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS AT AN EARLIER VISIT LAST DECEMBER. THE AMERICAN DELEGATION IS COMPOSED OF THE SAME PERSONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE WHO HAS TRANSFERRED TO A DIFFERENT ASSIGNMENT. IT INCLUDES A DEPUTY DIRECTOR ATTACHED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S EUROPEAN DESK, AN EXPERT ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PLANNING STAFF. THE NORWEGIAN SIDE WILL BE REPRESENTED BY KJELD VIBE, KJELL ELIASSEN AND OLAF BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. IT IS THE SAME DELEGATION AS LAST TIME. BUT AFTER KISSINGER DURING HIS VISIT HERE OBTAINED FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ISSUES, ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED A HIGHER-LEVEL AMERICAN DELEGATION. THERE IS ALSO A SURPRISING "GAP" BETWEEN THE LEVELS OF THE TWO DELEGATIONS. ON THE NORWEGIAN SIDE THE AMERICANS WILL MEET TOP PEOPLE.

THE US HAS TAKEN RESERVATIONS ON THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF POSTURE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE NORWEGIAN SIDE WILL PLACE GREAT EMPHASIS ON IMPRESSING UPON THE US THE NEED FOR ITS SUPPORT ON THIS MATTER, AND IN WINNING SUPPORT FOR THE NORWEGIAN VIEWS ON SOVERIGN RIGHTS AT SVALBARD.

THIS ROUND OF CLARIFICATIONS ABOUT THE SVALBARD ISSUE GOES CONFIDENTIAL

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BACK TO A DISCUSSION FRYDENLUND HAD WITH KISSINGER IN HELSINKI LAST YEAR. THIS DISCUSSION WAS FOLLOWED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE INGERSOLL'S TALKS HERE IN SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR. THEN, IN DECEMBER, THE AMERICAN CIVIL SERVANT DELEGATION CAME TO NORWAY.

IT TURNED OUT THAT THE AMERICANS HAD VERY LITTLE BACKGROUND FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SVALBARD PROBLEMS. THIS CLEARLY CAME OUT DURING INGERSOLL'S VISIT HERE. BUT THE PICTURE CHANGED COMPLETELY WHEN KISSINGER CAME LAST SPRING. KISSINGER ADMITTED HE HAD READ THE EXPERTS' REPORTS, BUT SIMPLY STATED HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ECONOMIC AND LEGAL ASSESSMENTS. HE SAID HE WAS MOSTLY INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS. KISSINGER ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT AS FAR AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT

LEADERSHIP WAS CONCERNED, THE AMERICAN SVALBARD POLICY HAD STILL NOT BEEN DETERMINED. ONE MUST THEREFORE ASSUME THAT THE AMERICAN DELEGATION OF EXPERTS NOW COMING TO OSLO WILL PREPARE A "BETTER" REPORT FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP SEEN BY NORWEGIAN EYES.

TRADITIONALLY, THE US HAS SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST FOR SVALBARD. ONE MUST GO QUITE A WAYS BACK TO FIND ANYTHING ABOUT SVALBARD IN THE ADMINISTRATION, BUT ON JANUARY 5, 1947 A SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID THE USSR AND NORWAY CANNOT ALTER THE SVALBARD TREATY WITHOUT CONSULTING THE US. IN 1948 THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THIS PROBLEM BECAME THE SUBJECT OF A CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ABOUT THE US POSTURE VIS-A-VIS SCANDINAVIA, WHICH LATER WAS APPROVED BY PRESIDENT TRUMAN. ACCORDING TO THE DOCUMENT, THE CHIEF AIM OF AMERICA'S SECURITY INTERESTS IN SVALBARD AREA LAY IN SUPPORTING NORWAY IN ITS MAINTENANCE OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ARCHIPELAGO AND IN SUPPORT OF ITS EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE AREA FROM BEING USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES BY A HOSTILE POWER.

NOT UNTIL BRATTELI VISITED MOSCOW IN 1974 DID WASHINGTON AGAIN BEGIN TO SHOW SOME INTEREST FOR THE SVALBARD REGION. AND WHEN THE USSR AGREED TO INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORWAY ON A DIVIDING LINE FOR THE BARENTS SEA, THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN OSLO PUT PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON TO ACHIEVE A CLARIFICATION OF THE CONSEQUENCES (OF A DIVIDING LINE).

END TEST

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2. ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY "DAGBLADET" REPORTER OLAV STORVIK, WHO PUBLISHED SIMILARLY UNHELPFUL ARTICLE ON HANSEN DRIFT STATION SEPT 27 (OSLO 4982). FOREIGN MINISTRY POLAR ADVISER BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN CALLED EMBASSY TO SAY FOREIGN MINISTRY WANTED EMBASSY TO KNOW IT DOES NOT SHARE STORVIK'S VIEWS AND DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO HIS COMMENTARY. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID STORVIK CALLED MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN EGIL HELLE TO ASK ABOUT US VISIT. TO QUESTIONS HELLE CONFIRMED TALKS WOULD BE HELD AND THAT DELEGATIONS WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE THE SAME AS DURING DECEMBER MEETINGS. STORKIV ASKED IF US DELEGATION WAS TO BE AT HIGHER LEVEL; HELLE REPEATED ONLY THAT LEVEL WOULD BE SAME AS LAST YEAR, ACCORDING BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN.

3. WE PLAN TO VOLUNTEER NO COMMENT ON "DAGBLADET" ARTICLE, NOR DOES MFA. "DAGBLADET" IS WELL-KNOWN FOR ITS SENSATIONALISM AND INACCURACY BUT IS VERY WELL READ. IN ANTICIPATION QUESTIONS ON THE TALKS, WE HAVE AGREED WITH MFA THAT THERE WILL BE NO PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING TALKS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS WE WILL REPLY BRIEFLY AND LOW-KEY AS FOLLOWS: IF ASKED PURPOSE OF TALKS WE WILL STATE UPCOMING MEETINGS ARE CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSIONS ON SVALBARD INITIATED LAST DECEMBER

AND CONTINUED DURING SECRETARY'S OFFICIAL VISIT HERE IN MAY AND THAT THEY ARE PART OF PROCESS OF ON-GOING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN CLOSE ALLIES. IF ASKED NAMES OF US OFFICIALS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE SPOKESMAN WILL PROVIDE NAMES OF US DELEGATION FROM WASHINGTON AND AMBASSADOR ANDERS. IF ASKED, WHY DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ARE INCLUDED ON DELEGATION THIS YEAR, SPOKESMAN WILL STATE THAT, AS WAS NOTED BY SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND LAST MAY DURING THEIR MEETING, THE ISSUES INVOLVED ARE BROAD ONES.

4. BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN SAID MFA WOULD PREFER TAKE SAME APPROACH TO PRESS AS AGREED ON AT LAST MEETING; I.E., NO INTERVIEWS OR STATEMENTS ABOUT MEETING, NOR PHOTOS OF THE DELEGATION.

5. ACTION: APPRECIATE DEPT ADVICE ON PARA 4.
ANDERS

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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